United Nations CRC/C/SR.2105

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
19 May 2016

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-second session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2105th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 May 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Mezmur

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the seventy-second session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General

2. **Mr. Salama** (Director, Human Rights Treaties Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that he wished to commend the Committee for having reduced its backlog of reports, thanks in large part to the use of dual chambers in 2015. There was likely to be an increase in the Committee's workload, however, as it reviewed the first complaints received under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (OPIC). Those developments would need to be reflected in the Secretary-General's first report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268, on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, which would address the possibility of additional meeting time being accorded for the biennium 2018-2019.

3. In January 2015, Norway and Switzerland had convened a meeting of States, independent experts and treaty body members at Wilton Park, at which the concept of an independent study to explore options for treaty body reform had been developed. In addition, in June 2015, at the twenty-seventh Annual Chairpersons Meeting, Costa Rica had called for a worldwide academic process to reflect on the future of the treaty body system.

4. In response, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights had invited a small group of independent researchers to examine different scenarios in the build-up to the 2020 review of the treaty body system and to define the parameters for the Academic Platform Project on the 2020 Review, which would look at future options for reform, assess the long-term sustainability of the system and develop innovative proposals and solutions. Participation in the Project would be extended to a larger group of researchers and to all relevant stakeholders, including treaty body members.

5. He was pleased to see that, in its concluding observations, the Committee had begun to link the Sustainable Development Goals to the rights contained in the Convention, thereby assisting the United Nations in its work at the country level. The Committee's concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Haiti, for example, had been included in the list of resources for the elaboration of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. He likewise welcomed the news that, through the creation of a working group to monitor the implementation of the Goals related to children's rights, the Goals would be at the heart of the Committee's work with the United Nations Children's Fund.

6. In March 2016, the Human Rights Council had held a panel discussion on information and communications technology and child sexual exploitation, following which it had adopted a resolution requesting OHCHR to focus its next annual day of discussion on the protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been presented to the Council in the same month.

7. Pursuant to a decision of the Office of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children was heading a high-level task force on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. Discussions were ongoing to secure the funding needed to launch a second phase of the Study, during which a secretariat would be established.

Submission of reports by States parties

8. **Ms. Franchetti** (Secretary of the Committee) said that 13 reports had been received since the Committee's previous session, bringing the number of reports pending consideration to 51. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, the Republic of Moldova, Spain and Tajikistan had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention. The initial report of Tonga was overdue. Four reports had been submitted under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC), namely the initial reports of Cyprus, Guinea and Vanuatu, and the combined third and fourth periodic reports of the United States of America. Three reports had been submitted under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC), namely the initial reports of Guinea and Vanuatu, and the combined third and fourth periodic reports of the United States of America.

9. The total number of ratifications of the Convention remained at 196. One State (Guinea) had ratified OPAC, bringing the total number of ratifications to 163. Two States (Samoa and the United Arab Emirates) had ratified OPSC, bringing the total number of ratifications to 173. Three States (Italy, Luxembourg and Samoa) had ratified OPIC, bringing the total number of ratifications to 27. The total number of signatories to OPIC remained at 50.

10. **The Chair** said that efforts to ensure universal implementation of the Convention were hampered by numerous challenges, including the persistence of de jure and de facto discrimination against children belonging to vulnerable groups and of sexual and other violence against children in general. There was a need to encourage the adoption of a child rights-based approach to the implementation of policies, programmes and laws; to support adolescents suffering from mental health disorders, malnutrition, substance addiction, HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses; to improve access to critical prevention and care services; and to respond to health emergencies, such as those caused by the Ebola and Zika virus diseases, which continued to inhibit children's right to life, survival and development.

11. The Committee remained seriously concerned about the migration crisis. It was particularly concerned about the increase in the immigration detention of children, which it urged States parties to end. It was also concerned about reports that, in 2015, thousands of unaccompanied children had disappeared in Europe after registering with State authorities and were thus exposed to a heightened risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

12. It was more important than ever to ensure that the provisions of the Convention and its Optional Protocols were applied to the digital environment and that all stakeholders were provided with guidance for the realization of children's rights online. In that connection, the Committee was concerned about the slow pace of accession to, and reporting under, OPAC, OPSC and OPIC.

13. The Committee was participating in the task force on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and looked forward to the prompt mobilization of key resources by States and other stakeholders.

14. The Committee's recent press releases had highlighted, inter alia, the application of the death penalty to persons found guilty of committing a crime when under 18 years of age; policies for the treatment of migrant children, including in processing centres; and the urgent need to protect children in the context of armed conflict.

Organization of work

15. **The Chair**, reviewing the items on the agenda, said that 10 reports from 8 States parties would be considered by the Committee during the session. He welcomed the many partners who contributed to the Committee's work. Discussions would continue on follow-

up to the treaty body strengthening process and on OPIC, and any communications received under OPIC would be considered. The Committee would also continue preparing for its next day of general discussion, work on four general comments and discuss any other matters relating to its work. On 28 and 29 May, the Committee would hold a retreat to discuss ways to streamline its concluding observations.

Adoption of the agenda (CRC/C/72/1)

16. *The agenda was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.25 a.m.